

PEOPLE

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Mickey moves on

School business
manager retires after
13.5 years of number
crunching

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DUXBURY — For the past 13.5 years the school department's finances have been left in the faithful hands of business manager Mickey McGonagle. In a tenure that coincided with former superintendent Eileen Williams, and current superintendent Susan Skeiber, when she was Assist. Supt., the last administration change of the year comes with his retire-

ment at the stroke of midnight on the New Year.

"The great part about Mickey is that he can listen to the administration team talk about teaching and learning and academics and add insight that is right on target," Skeiber said. "He is much more than the numbers, he is greatly going to be missed."

In 1988 McGonagle and his wife Eleanor moved their family to Duxbury. All three of his children attended and graduated from the Duxbury school system, which he said that was a significant motivating factor in him seeking a position in the school. In 1994, after years of volunteering his time and knowledge at the school he became the business manager.

SEE MICKEY, PAGE 3



STAFF PHOTO/ANDRIA FARRELL
Business Manager Mickey McGonagle is retiring from the school department after 13 years.

McGonagle retires as business manager

FROM MICKEY, PAGE 1

Now after 13.5 years he is retiring. When working with numbers he said everything goes out to the decimal.

McGonagle recalled his first day, and first task as business manager. It was July and everyone was on vacation, and he was in charge. At the time the high school was going through a major reconstruction after a fire had caused damage to one wing of the school. It was his job to settle the insurance claim for renovating the wing.

"I had to get it done by before school started in September," he said. "Welcome to Duxbury!"

Skeiber remembered when they going through the Alden building project there was a question about the square footage of the Alden gym, which is now the library. Mickey pulled a number out of his head, a number she assumed

was just a guesstimate.

"He (Mickey) looked up the sky and came back with a number. When he first said it I thought he was trying to keep me quiet, and just throw a number out there. When we did the measurement he was within square feet of the actual footage," Skeiber said. "After that I never doubted his numbers again. He has an amazing ability to cover those kind of numbers."

During McGonagle's time as business manager, he not only helped with the finances by going over the budget and managing construction projects, he also led the way in saving energy and costs by finding alternative energy saving resources. He took small projects and small measures that have helped save the school money, but also helped in conserving energy.

"Conservation is the most effective way to save money on energy," he said.

"If there is a problem he will tell you about three, four, even five different ways to solve it," Skeiber said. "He always has a solution, and not just one."

His words of wisdom to his successor, "Take your time, be patient, figure out the solution to the problem, work hard at and remain patient," he said. "There are many rewards and challenges to this position, I have every confidence that Peter (Etzal) will continue to do the job as well as I have."

As a compulsive planner and organizer, McGonagle said he has no plans for his retirement. Work on his house, spend time with his family, spend time in Florida, and enjoy the things he loves, like music.

"My first act in retirement is not to plan or problem solve. We will see what happens, but that is my first act," he said. "I am going to see what life is like

when you don't work."

A man who knows the budget inside and out, who has been instrumental in building better schools, both concretely, and academically, who has helped save money, energy and time, and who has helped transition a new school administration in his final six months of work, has also been begged during many school committee meetings to reconsider his retirement. Although he has stuck to his guns, it has been echoed by many faculty members, administrators, school committee members and parents, that his retirement is a loss to the school.

"For me it is a sad day, one I have not been looking forward to since I took over as superintendent," Skeiber said. "I realize he is ready to retire, and no one should hold you back, but he will be missed, definitely by me."